

§ 95-148. Safety and health programs of State agencies and local governments.

It shall be the responsibility of each administrative department, commission, board, division or other agency of the State and of counties, cities, towns and subdivisions of government to establish and maintain an effective and comprehensive occupational safety and health program which is consistent with the standards and regulations promulgated under this Article. The head of each agency shall:

- (1) Provide safe and healthful places and conditions of employment, consistent with the standards and regulations promulgated by this Article.
- (2) Acquire, maintain, and require the use of safety equipment, personal protective equipment, and devices reasonably necessary to protect employees.
- (3) Consult with and encourage employees to cooperate in achieving safe and healthful working conditions.
- (4) Keep adequate records of all occupational accidents and illnesses for proper evaluation and corrective action.
- (5) Consult with the Commissioner as to the adequacy as to form and content of records kept pursuant to this section.
- (6) Make an annual report to the Commissioner with respect to occupational accidents and injuries and the agency's program under this section.

The Commissioner shall transmit annually to the Governor and the General Assembly a report of the activities of the State agency and instrumentalities under this section. If the Commissioner has reason to believe that any local government program or program of any agency of the State is ineffective, the Commissioner shall, after unsuccessfully seeking by negotiations to abate this failure, include this in the Commissioner's annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly, together with the reasons therefor, and may recommend legislation intended to correct the condition.

The Commissioner shall have access to the records and reports kept and filed by State agencies and instrumentalities pursuant to this section unless such records and reports are required to be kept secret in the interest of national defense, in which case the Commissioner shall have access to such information as will not jeopardize national defense.

Employees of any agency or department covered under this section are afforded the same rights and protections as granted employees in the private sector.

This section shall not apply to volunteer fire departments not a part of any municipality.

Any municipality with a population of 10,000 or less may exclude its fire department from the operation of this section by a resolution of the governing body of the municipality, except that the resolution may not exclude those firefighters who are employees of the municipality.

The North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission shall recommend regulations and standards for fire departments. (1973, c. 295, s. 23; 1983, c. 164; 1985, c. 544; 1989, c. 750, s. 3; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1020, s. 1; 2014-115, s. 6.)